

The Brown House  
Galveston, Texas.  
Galveston Co

HABS No. 33-B-3

✓ HABS  
TEX.  
84- GALV  
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ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District No. 33

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Marvin Eickenroht, District Officer  
San Antonio, Texas.

J. M. BROWN HOUSE  
Galveston, Galveston County, Texas

HAES  
TEX.  
64-GALV

Owner El Mina Shrine, Masonic Lodge.

Date of Erection Soon after 1853.

Architect

Builder Owner, J. M. Brown

Present Condition Excellent.

Number of Stories Three.

Materials of Construction Brick and concrete. Ironwork.  
Materials brought from Philadelphia.

Other Existing Records: Took three months to come on sailing vessel which anchored outside the bar and materials had to be lightered in. Iron work wrought in England. Used in balconies across front on all floors also in fence surrounding grounds. Posts twined with delicate leaves and topped with ears of ripened corn. Galleries floored in red tile and all windows with ornamental valance of concrete. House had fifteen rooms with stables and slave quarters joined to main house by one story porch house. Interior very handsome, with marble and mahogany fireplaces, mirrors and windows framed in walnut ornamented in 22 carat gold leaf. Ceilings with plaster frieze and center medallions. Carved woodwork decorated in gold leaf all the work of French artisans. Crystal chandeliers and many beautiful ornaments brought from abroad. Home played a conspicuous part in civic, social and military life of city.

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
BY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

J. M. BROWN HOUSE  
24TH STREET & BROADWAY  
GALVESTON, GALVESTON CO., TEXAS

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The house is now owned and occupied by the El Mina Shrine Temple. It was bought from Mrs. Jumonville of New Orleans in 1923.

The original owner and builder was Capt. J. M. Brown, who designed and built the house in the late 1850's. Mrs. Jumonville inherited the place from Capt. Brown late in the 19th century.

In 1923, the ballroom was added at the rear of the house, the partitions were removed on the third floor (original servant's quarters), and the partitions on the third floor of the stable wing were re-arranged. When the ball room was built, the original Kitchen and Service Rooms were razed. At this time toilets were added and partitions removed from Billiard Room too. The octagonal wing on the northeast was added in the 1870's.

The building stands on the original site, but the site has been raised two to three feet by the filling in of the Island.

The Trans-Mississippi department of the Confederacy was surrendered in this house on June 18, 1865, to General Gordon Granger. Capt. Brown was a great entertainer, and his house was the center of social life in Galveston. All visiting notables were entertained by him.

Legend has it that the brick for this house were brought by schooner from Philadelphia, Capt. Brown's original home, but an article in the Galveston News, Aug. 18, 1907 says that all the brick were burned on the Island by Capt. Brown. He and his brother were brick burners and masons. This is reputed to be the first brick residence built in Texas. All the labor, both in burning the brick and building the house, was performed by slaves. All the wood-work on the first floor is walnut, which has been painted over. The window

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2.

valances and mirrors in the Gold Room were made in France and are covered with 22 carat gold leaf. Capt. Brown was a constant traveler; so was his daughter, Betty, who was also somewhat of an artist, interested in painting, tapestry, lace, etc.

Author Jas. J. Campbell

Approved Marvin Eickensholt

*Reviewed 1936, H.C.F.*

DATA NOT COMPILED AND NOT GUARANTEED  
BY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

ADDENDUM  
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to:

HABS No. TX-33B-3

James Mareau Brown House  
("Ashton Villa", El Mina Shrine Temple)  
2328 Broadway  
Galveston  
Galveston County  
Texas  
as recorded in 1934, 1936,

HABS  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## JAMES MAREAU BROWN HOUSE ("Ashton Villa," El Mina Shrine Temple)

An Addendum to  
"James Mareau Brown House"  
("Ashton Villa," El Mina Shrine Temple)  
2328 Broadway  
Galveston  
Galveston County  
Texas

Location: 2328 Broadway, Galveston, Galveston County, Texas

Present Owner  
and Occupant: El Mina Shrine Temple

Present Use: Shrine Temple

Significance: Brown established the largest wholesale hardware business in the southwest. He was also engaged in other significant business ventures in Galveston. His house is believed to have been erected in 1859.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Believed to have been built in 1859.
2. Architect: James M. Brown
3. Original and subsequent owners: The house was built, owned and occupied by Col. James M. Brown. Since 1928 the building has been the El Mina Shrine Temple.
4. Builder, contractor, supplier: Col. James M. Brown, a master of the brick mason's trade from an early apprenticeship in New York and along the Ohio River, was his own architect and builder, and the brick used was burned in his own brickyard.
5. Alterations and additions: The original structure was a large three story brick block, separated at the rear by a wooden breezeway from a rear two story structure on the alley. At some date in the 1890's a large wing was added on the east. Later additions have since been made at the rear.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Colonel J. M. Brown was born in New York City September 22, 1821. In his youth he worked on canal boats on the Erie Canal and later learned the brick-mason's trade by apprenticeship. In so doing he grasped the art of building and worked his way down the Ohio River building courthouses, cisterns and jails and providing estimates and making contracts for them.

Brown arrived in Galveston in 1842 or 1843. Before the Civil War he engaged in the hardware business with Stephen Kirkland and after the war with a Mr. Lang. Later the company became the largest wholesale hardware supplier in the southwest and was known as the J. S. Brown and Company. Brown's son was the president of the firm then.

Colonel Brown was active in other business interests and during the Civil War was president of the Galveston, Houston and Henderson Railway and purchasing agent in Mexico for the Confederate states. Later he was instrumental in the formation of the First National Bank of Galveston and its president for some years.

Besides his own dwelling, several buildings are credited to Brown. He is said to have erected the first brick jail on the Island and to have built the old market house and the Catholic cathedral.

C. Bibliography:

Brown, John H., Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, Austin, 1896, pp. 712-15.

Galveston Daily News, December 26, 1895.

Goeldner, Paul, The Texas Catalog: Historic American Buildings Survey, San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974.

Morgan, William M., Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, Galveston Texas, 1841-1953, Houston and Galveston: The Anson Jones Press, 1954, p. 271.

Prepared by John C. Garner, Jr.  
Director  
Galveston Architecture Inventory  
March 24, 1967

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is a three story brick mass with a slightly projecting central portico. A polygonal wing projects from the east side. The roof is very flat and has deep projecting eaves supported by large paired modillion brackets.
2. Condition of fabric: Fair, the bricks being locally burned, are soft and the building has been poorly cared for by the present owners.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The main block measures 49'-3" x 53'-1" and stands three stories in height.
2. Foundations: Assumed to be of brick; probably isolated piers.
3. Wall construction: Brick exterior; patterned belt course.
4. Structural system: Load bearing walls with pilasters at all angles. Upper openings arcuated; others trabeated.
5. Porches: A two-story, three-bay double gallery of cast iron with paired columns and railings projects from the central part of the front facade.
6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys for the central block.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Front entrance doors are double; outside doors are divided to provide free swinging top and bottom sections, paneled and with one glass light cast-iron lintel above. Inside, with one large circular head light and small bottom panel, also glass transom.
  - b. Windows: Ground floor windows are two light double-hung (originally triple-hung) and extend to floor level; on side and rear facades are twelve-light double-hung windows. Second floor front facade are eight light double-hung windows at the corners, central windows are six-light triple-hung; side facades are twelve light double-hung. Third story are eight-light, elliptical head, double-hung. All windows with adjustable exterior wood louvered shutters.



8. Roof: The main block has a standing seam metal hipped roof, 4 3/4 inch 12 pitch; the central pavilion has a projecting gable roof with the same pitch and covering. The east wing has a shallow pitched gable roof. The large overhang on all walls extend 5', and is supported with brackets.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: A central stair hall extends from front to back of the building and is flanked on the west by one large parlor, also extending the full depth, and on the east by a front parlor and the dining room. The upper floors follow the lower with the typical central hall with two rooms flanking on the west and the entire east side including the east wing all one room. Third floor, originally central hall, is flanked by one room each side.
2. Stairways: Ground floor stair, straight with flared bottom treads and landing, located on the east wall of the central stair hall. Second and third floors reached by dog-leg stairs with winders.
3. Floor: 1 x 6 inch pine boards.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood lath and plaster. Lower floor rooms have plaster cornice.
5. Doors: Three sets of sliding double doors in entrance hall, four paneled doors also between southeast corner room and east wing room. Others are four and two paneled doors.
6. Trim: Molded wood trim around openings and baseboards.
7. Mechanical equipment:
  - a. Hardware: Mortice locks, butt hinges.
  - b. Lighting: Some original gas lights; others modern, electric.
  - c. Heating: Modern, gas stoves. Several original marble mantels; typical of the period of 1882.

D. Site:

1. Orientation and General setting: The building occupies lots in Block #203; the northeast corner of 24th and Broadway Streets faces south.

2. Enclosure: Cast iron fence, gate posts ornamented with a pinnacle of ears of corn.
3. Outbuildings: Brick two and three story outhouses at northeast corner of property.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.  
Director  
Galveston Architecture Inventory  
March 24, 1967

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Galveston Survey was jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation and the Galveston Historical Foundation Inc., and developed under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The historical data was written by John C. Garner, Jr., acting as the Director of the Galveston Architecture Inventory. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by Allen Stross in the summer of 1967.